

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is requiring restriction to one of the following groups:

Group I: Claims 1-13, drawn to a method for producing a reduced metal using upgraded coal;

Group II: Claims 14-18 and 20, drawn to a method for producing a reduced metal using upgraded coal; and

Group III: Claims 19 and 21, drawn to a method for producing a slag using upgraded coal.

Applicants provisionally elect Group I, Claims 1-13, drawn to a method for producing upgraded coal, with traverse on the grounds that no adequate reasons and/or examples have been provided to support a conclusion of patentable distinctiveness between the identified groups. Also, it has not been shown that a burden exists in searching the claims of the three groups.

Moreover, the MPEP at § 803 states as follows:

“If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without a serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on its merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.”

Applicants respectfully submit that a search of all of the claims would not impose a serious burden on the Office.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that, should the claims of Group I be found allowable, the Office should expand its search to the claims of Groups II and III.

Accordingly, and for the reasons presented above, Applicants submit that the Office has failed to meet the burden necessary in order to sustain the Restriction Requirement.

Withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement is respectfully requested.

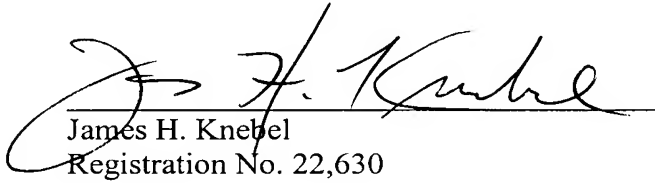
Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is now in  
condition for examination on the merits, and early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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